

Hannah Anderson Op-Ed
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Why Going Greek is a Good Direction

Fraternity and sorority life (FSL), also known as Greek life, is one great way for students to get involved, just like the other 270 student groups on the University of Oregon campus. FSL encourages a sense of community involvement, promotes diversity and accountability, and sets educational standards. FSL is held to a higher standard as a strong representation of the university and of its national organizations, providing students with outstanding opportunities both during and after college.

Greek life has over 200 years of history. Students choose to join a chapter for various reasons. Whether it is for life long friendships, professional experience, leadership or community service, students choose to join a chapter for their own personal reasons.

Scholarship and learning are core values of the FSL community. Greek life stresses the importance of a higher education and provides opportunities for its members both in and out of college. Panhellenic President Rebecca Brennan is a great representation of an FSL member. She conquered many opportunities that advanced her leadership development through her Greek membership experience, including conferences in Washington, D.C. The FSL community is required to uphold national and university standards. In fact, FSL requires a higher GPA than the university itself. USA Today says college graduation rates are 20 percent higher among Greeks than non-Greeks. Nine million college students in the U.S. are members of Greek organizations. Additionally, 85 percent of the Fortune 500 executives are Greek life alumni.

It is no secret that the vast majority of news about Greek life is negative, so a headline about hazing will trump a headline about a Greek philanthropic event. Some people believe that by removing Greek life from college campuses, it will eliminate binge drinking and sexual assaults. Sexual assault and binge drinking are not strictly in the Greek community, although it's easier to measure because it only represents 16 percent of the whole student body. The University of Oregon task force recently recommended halting the expansion of Greek life on campus to reduce sexual violence. Studies show that smaller chapter sizes increase accountability measures because there are less people to manage. By halting the expansion of new chapters on campus, this adds more members to existing chapters, making it difficult to hold each member accountable for their actions.

UO psychology professor, Jennifer Freyd, conducted a survey to assess student experiences of sexual victimization, perpetration and institutional behaviors. Questions were related to topics of non-consensual sexual activity, sexual assault, and alcohol consumption of Greek members versus non-Greek members. One thing found is that a high volume of Greek members experience sexual assault in relation to alcohol consumption, but this doesn't prove that the root of the issue comes from within the UO Greek community.

According to USA Today there has been at least one death from hazing per year since 1975, 82 percent of which are from binge drinking. Binge drinking is a

problem amongst all students on college campuses. One major improvement can be how universities educate its students about alcohol consumption. The amount of alcohol consumption is a choice students make for themselves. Greek life offers more than easy access to parties and booze.

Lastly the FSL community values diversity. Elite Daily notes 64 percent of gay fraternity members and 56 percent of lesbians report high degree of satisfaction from their Greek experience. FSL works hard to eliminate any limitations from students joining a chapter. Financial scholarships are offered for each chapter to accommodate those in need. In addition, several executive positions for the FSL board offer a generous compensation to its leaders. It comes down to what each student chooses to value during he or she's Greek experience.

(Hannah Anderson is an ex-Greek member and Senior at the UO)